

EXHIBIT D: FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PLANT LIFE

As stated in Arizona Administrative Code R14-3-219:

“List the fish, wildlife, plant life and associated forms of life in the vicinity of the proposed site or route and describe the effects, if any, the proposed facilities will have thereon.”

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The PSA is a developing suburban area. The majority of the PSA is either used as residential, commercial, or agricultural property. There is limited native desert mixed with the existing development. The vegetation and wildlife typical of the PSA are described below and are similar for all alternative alignments unless noted.

FISH

There are no fish or perennial waters affected by the proposed transmission line alignments. No wetlands were observed within the proposed alignments during the field visit or from topographical maps of the region.

WILDLIFE

Wildlife typical of lower elevations of the Sonoran Desert occurs within the PSA. Common species include black-tailed jackrabbits (*Lepus californicus*), Costa’s hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), roadrunner (*Geococcyz californicus*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), and cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*). Common reptile species include the common side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), tiger whiptail (*Aspidoscelia tigris*), gophersnake (*Pituophis catenifer*), and western diamond-backed rattlesnake (*Crotalus atrox*).

Construction and operation of the proposed Project along any of the proposed alignments will impact small areas of habitat of regionally common wildlife species. Impacts are expected to be minimal, however, because proposed Project alignments are primarily adjacent to existing linear corridors within already developed suburban uses or in agricultural areas. Some wildlife may be displaced by Project construction activities, but habitat is generally available in the immediate vicinity of the Project alignments.

VEGETATION

Vegetation in the PSA has been classified into the following four different categories:

1. Native vegetation – The PSA is within the Lower Colorado River Valley subdivision of the Sonoran Desert Scrub Community. Native desert areas are characterized by scattered Sonoran Desert vegetation, dominated by creosote (*Larrea tridentata*).
2. Riparian vegetation – A narrow band of riparian vegetation occurs along Queen Creek. Mature cottonwoods form a narrow riparian row and canopy along the creek. The creek passes through the northern portion of the study area. The Meridian Road and North Railroad alignments would span the creek where riparian vegetation is present and may require some vegetation trimming or clearing.
3. Agricultural land – Agricultural land consists of lands where crops are actively grown or areas where crops were previously grown.
4. Developed land – includes developed residential and commercial property.

Project construction and operation would impact native vegetation and agricultural crops along all of the proposed Project alignments. Construction of the North-Railroad, Germann (Signal Butte Sub-alternative) and Ryan (Signal Butte Sub-alternative) alignments could also affect an area of riparian vegetation along Queen Creek Wash. Impacts to vegetation, however, are expected to be minimal because the Project alignments generally parallel other linear features and potentially impacted vegetation is not unique or considered to be special status species.